

## Be safe this summer by recognizing these heat warning signs!

Many Kent County employees work outside regularly and that can be hazardous if weather conditions become extreme. The fact is extremely high or unusually hot temperatures can affect your health. On average, 618 deaths from extreme heat events occur each year in the United States. **Most vulnerable are the elderly, those who work or exercise outdoors, infants and children, the homeless or poor, and people with a chronic medical condition.**

While the body normally cools itself by sweating, during cases of extreme heat this might not be enough. In these cases, a person's rises faster than it can cool itself down, which can cause damage to the brain and other vital organs. Please keep in mind that there are several other risk factors as well that may increase your risk of a heat related illness, they are:

- High humidity
- Obesity
- Fever
- Dehydration
- Prescription drug use
- Heart disease
- Poor circulation
- Alcohol use

Employee should take the necessary precautions to prevent serious health effects such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

### *Stay cool*

- Stay in air-conditioned buildings.
- Contact the Kent County Emergency Management Division at 302-735-2200 to locate an air-conditioned shelter in your area.
- Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device.
- Limit outdoor activity, especially midday when it is the hottest part of the day, and avoid direct sunlight.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Take cool showers or baths to lower your body temperature.
- Check on at-risk friends, family and neighbors at least twice a day.

### *Stay hydrated*

- Drink more than usual and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink.
- Drink from two to four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside.
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar.
- Make sure your family, friends and neighbors are drinking enough water.

### *Stay informed*

- Check your local news for extreme heat warnings and safety tips.

- Keep your friends, family and neighbors aware of weather and heat safety information.

Additionally, the Kent County Emergency Medical Services Division encourages all residents to learn the signs and first aid response for heat-related illness. Warning signs and symptoms vary but may include:

### **Heat Exhaustion**

#### *Symptoms*

- Heavy sweating
- Weakness
- Skin cold, pale, and clammy
- Weak pulse
- Fainting and vomiting

#### *What You Should Do*

- Move to a cooler location.
- Lie down and loosen your clothing.
- Apply cool, wet cloths to as much of your body as possible.
- Sip water.
- If you have vomited and it continues, seek medical attention immediately.

### **Heat Stroke**

#### *Symptoms*

- High body temperature (above 103°F)
- Hot, red, dry or moist skin
- Rapid and strong pulse
- Possible unconsciousness

#### *What You Should Do*

- Call 911 immediately — this is a medical emergency.
- Move the person to a cooler environment.
- Reduce the person's body temperature with cool cloths or even a bath.
- Do NOT give fluids

Be safe this summer and if you see a safety hazard in the workplace, please notify your Supervisor and the County Safety Officer Brandon Olenik at 735-2201.